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mantris sit. This durbar must not be confused with the electoral durbar which will be referred to later. It is an executive council over which the Siem presides, and also possesses judicial powers (for a description of a judicial durbar, see page 91 of the monograph). The form of summons to appear before this durbar used to be a knotted piece of string or cane, the number of knots denoting the degrees of urgency of the summons, not a piece of pork, as one writer has said. Pork is a luxury which is not usually distributed gratis. The Siem manages the State business through his *mantris*, although it is true that in some States the members of the Siem family have been allowed a considerable share of the State management. This latter arrangement is, however, a departure from the ordinary rule in the Siemships, and is regarded as unconstitutional. In some States there are village headmen, styled Sirdars, who settle cases, collect labour, and assess and receive for the chief the *pynsuk*, which may be literally translated as "gratification." In Nongstoin there is an official styled *lyngskor*, who is the superior of a number of village sirdars, and who acts as the Siem's deputy-governor. In the Khasi Hills there is no land revenue, nor are there any tithes or other imposts levied upon the cultivator's produce. The land, to a great extent, is the property of the different clans and villages, although in some instances there are estates owned by private persons. The chief is entitled to receive the income that arises from what are known as the *raj* or State lands only. All that the Siem usually receives from his people in the way of direct revenue is the State subscription, or *pynsuk*, mentioned above. Even this is supposed to be a voluntary contribution, and it is not demanded in some States. This tax is nominally a collection to meet the expenses of the State ceremonies, but is really a means of increasing the chief's private income. The contribution varies in amount according to the means of the villagers. The Siem's principal source of income, however, in all the Khasi States is the toll (*khrong*), which he takes from those who sell at the markets in his territory. As the Khasis are great traders these tolls are often at the larger markets fairly valuable. The chief raises no excise revenue, the manufacture of both fermented and distilled

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respective villages; sometimes, however, there are disputes regarding those lands between the different villages. Such disputes are settled by the Lynngam Sirdars of villages or by the Sirdars sitting with the two Lyngskors of the Siemship. If the disputes cannot be settled by these officials to the satisfaction of the parties, the latter are taken by the Lyngskors and Sirdars to the Siem of Nongstoin, who tries the case with the aid of the State mantris.

LAWS REGARDING OTHER PROPERTY.

There is no separate law applying to personal property, as opposed to real property, amongst the Khasis.

DECISION OF DISPUTES.

Khasi Courts of Judicature.

In the first place a complaint is made before the Siem, or chief, against a certain party or parties. The facts and circumstances of the case are then detailed before the chief and his headmen, the ostensible object being to attempt to bring about a compromise between the parties. If no reconciliation can be effected, a crier (*u nong pyrta shnong*), or in the Jaintia Hills a *sangot*, is sent out to proclaim at the top of his voice the durbar which is to assemble the following evening. He proceeds to cry the durbar in the evening when all the inhabitants have returned to the village from their usual daily pursuits. With a loud premonitory yell the crier makes use of the following formula *:—

"*Kaw!* thou, a fellow-villager; thou, a fellow-creature; thou, an old man; thou, who art grown up; thou, who art young; thou, a boy; thou, a child; thou, an infant; thou, who art little; thou, who art great. *Hei!* because there is a contest. *Hei!* for to cause to sit together. *Hei!* for to cause to deliberate. *Hei!* for to give intelligence together. *Hei!* about to assemble in durbar. *Hei!* for to listen attentively. *Hei!* ye are forbidden. *Hei!* ye are stopped to draw water then

* What follows is a literal translation of the Khasi.

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203 694 not to cut firewood then; *Hei!* to go as coolies then; *Hei!* to go to work then; *Hei!* to go a journey then; *Hei!* to descend to the valley then; *Hei!* he who has a pouch. *Hei!* he who has a bag. *Hei!* now come forth. *Hei!* now appear. *Hei!* the hearing then is to be all in company. *Hei!* the listening attentively then is to be all together. *Hei!* for his own king. *Hei!* for his own lord, lest destruction has come; lest wearing away has overtaken *us*. *Kaw!* come forth now fellow mates."

This proclamation is called *khang shnong*, and by it all are stopped from going anywhere from the village the following day. [687] Anybody who disregards the prohibition is liable to fine. 695 The following day, towards evening, all the grown-up males of the village assemble at the durbar ground, the site of which is marked in some villages by rows of flat stones, arranged in an irregular circle, upon which the durbaris sit. The proceedings are opened by one of the headmen, who makes a long speech; then others follow, touching upon all sorts of irrelevant matters, but throwing out hints, now and then, bearing on the subject of accusation. By degrees the debate waxes warmer, and the parties get nearer the point. Then the complainant and the defendant each of them throw down on the ground a turban, or a bag containing betul and *pán*, lime, &c., in front of the durbar. These are regarded as the pledges of the respective parties and their representatives in the suit; they receive the name of *mamla* (hence the Khasi term *ar liang mamla* for the two contending parties in the suit). There are pleaders on both sides called *'riw sdid*, who address the durbar in lengthy speeches, the Siem being the judge and the whole body of the durbar the jury. Witnesses are examined by the parties; in former times they were sworn on a pinch of salt placed on a sword. The most sacred and most binding form of oath, however, is sworn on *u klong* (a hollow gourd containing liquor). As, however, the latter form of oath is regarded by the Khasis as a most serious ordeal, it will be described separately. The 695 durbar sometimes goes on for several days. At length the 982 finding of the durbar is taken, after the Siem has summed up, and sentence is pronounced, which generally consists of a fine in money, almost always accompanied by an order to the losing